



Schedule of Events

Opening Keynote with Ruta Sepetys

Ruta Sepetys is an internationally acclaimed, #1 **New York Times** bestselling author of historical fiction published in over sixty countries and forty languages. Ruta is considered a “crossover” novelist as her books are read by both students and adults worldwide. Winner of the Carnegie Medal, Ruta is renowned for giving voice to underrepresented history and those who experienced it. Her books have won or been shortlisted for over forty book prizes, are included on over thirty state reading lists, and are currently in development for film and television.

Ruta is the daughter of a Lithuanian refugee. Born in Michigan, she was raised in a family of artists, readers, and music lovers. Ruta is passionate about the power of history and story to foster global dialogue and connectivity. She has been invited to present at NATO, European Parliament, the U.S. Capitol, the Library of Congress, and embassies worldwide. She was awarded The Rockefeller Foundation’s prestigious Bellagio Fellowship for her studies on human resilience. **The New York Times Book Review** declared, “Ruta Sepetys acts as champion of the interstitial people so often ignored—whole populations lost in the cracks of history.”

Ruta’s latest book, ***I Must Betray You***, is sure to land on many best of 2022 lists for teens. Learn about this book and her others in this exciting opening keynote session!

- **Breakout Session #1**

Kai Harris, “Meet the Author”

- **Breakout Session #2**

Shelly Proebestle, “Michigan Department of Education Early Learning Update”

Join Shelly Proebestle from the superintendent’s office of the Michigan Department of Education for an update on the state of education in Michigan. As Literacy Manager at MDE, Shelly has firsthand experience of where we are as a state and where we need to go to ensure that all children are Ready to Read when they start kindergarten and successful in 3rd grade reading and beyond.

- **Breakout Session #3**

Sara Grochowski, "Revisiting and Reconsidering the Classics with YA Retellings & Reimaginings"

Consider why classic literature endures and where it falls short as you hear about books for teens that retell, reimagine, and reclaim familiar stories to engage readers of all experiences.

Midday Keynote with Kyle Lukoff

Kyle Lukoff writes books for kids and other people. Before becoming a full-time writer, Kyle worked at five bookstores, in four libraries, for three schools, as two genders, through one intersection: people, and books. Kyle is the author of many books for young readers. His debut middle-grade novel, ***Too Bright To See***, received a Newbery honor, the Stonewall award, and was a National Book Award Finalist. Kyle will focus on his latest book and what's coming next!

- **Breakout Session #4**

Dr. Rob Bittner, "Reflecting on Queer History for a Better Queer Future"

Rob Bittner is a researcher of LGBTQ literature for teens, as well as transgender and genderqueer teen reading habits, particularly reactions to trans and queer representation. Rob will take us on a journey through queer history and help guide us toward a better future. Rob is an expert in this field, and we are lucky to have the opportunity to learn from him!

- **Breakout Session #5**

Casey Coker, "Are You a Porcupine or Teddy Bear: Understanding Trauma in Our Youth (and Ourselves!)"

Our earliest relationships can have a big impact on our relationships later in life. The phrase "trauma informed care" is a huge buzzword in helping communities and organizations. In this presentation, we will discuss what trauma looks like for some people and how it can affect individuals across the lifespan.

- **Breakout Session #6**

Sandra Farag, "Why Diversify?"

Join KPL's Head of Youth Services, Sandra Farag, as she talks about why it is important to have diverse collections in public and school libraries, how we select and deselect titles for the collections, how we make sure that all who use our libraries are represented, and steps in dealing with challenges to content.

Closing Keynote with Ruth Forman

Ruth Forman is the author of the board books ***Curls, Glow, Bloom*** and ***Ours*** (Simon & Schuster, 2020, 2021 & 2022). She is an award-winning author of the poetry collections ***Prayers Like Shoes*** (Whit, 2009), ***Renaissance*** (Beacon, 1997), and ***We Are the Young Magicians*** (Beacon, 1993), as well as the children's book ***Young Cornrows Callin Out the Moon*** (Children's Book Press, 2007).

Ruth has received the Barnard New Women Poets Prize, The Pen Oakland Josephine Miles Literary Award, The Durfee Artist Fellowship, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities Artist Fellowships, the National Council of Teachers of English Notable Book Award, and recognition by The American Library Association. She provides writing workshops at retreats, schools, and universities across the country and abroad, and has presented in forums such as the United Nations, the PBS series ***The United States of Poetry***, and National Public Radio.

Ruth is a former teacher of creative writing with the University of Southern California and June Jordan's Poetry for the People program at UC Berkeley, as well as a longtime faculty member with the VONA writing program. An MFA graduate of the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television, she often collaborates on film, music, dance, theatre, art, and media projects. She is currently a professor at the Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College. When not writing and teaching, she practices a passion for martial arts: classical Yang family style tai chi chuan, tai chi sword, and bo staff. Ruth currently lives in the Washington, DC area.

Bonus recorded session

Clare Membiela, "Challenging Times in Libraries"

Take time to listen to this recorded session from Clare Membiela. Clare is the library law consultant for statewide library services with the Library of Michigan. Clare will talk about ways to keep libraries and staff safe during the uptick in book challenges and will talk about proactive strategies with library policies to maintain intellectual freedom.



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